

Contact

Magazine for and about members of the 349th Air Mobility Wing
Travis Air Force Base, California

Vol. 18, No. 4

April 2000



Black pins on first star!

Commander's corner

by Brig. Gen. Gerald A. Black
349th AMW Commander

In this Year of the Military Family, I feel it is appropriate to single out one member of the family for special consideration this month.

Believe me, this is no easy task. After all, who is most important in a military family? I can't answer that; I don't think there really is a "correct" answer. That said, I'd still like to dedicate this column to the military spouse, all the husbands and wives who help make it possible for those of us in uniform to be in uniform.

What can I write that hasn't been said before? Millions of words have been written to express the selflessness and dedication of those who stayed behind while their warrior served in action. History is full of such stories.

In our own time, the story is much the same, although women no longer have a monopoly on the home side. More and more often men have found themselves the mainstay of the family as their wives go off to serve.

The point is that often one spouse must take on a disproportionate share of keeping the family going, while dealing with the many problems that arise with sudden

singleness. Children, school, moves, the job, the house, bills, the million and one crises that make up modern life; nothing stops when one spouse, one-half of the partnership, must be away, mind on other matters.

Much has been made of the fact that people in civilian life also travel every day on business, some for long stretches of time, and their spouses face a lot of the same problems. Never forget this one fact though: your average business trip does not have the risks that are a part of the military. That's why I have such great respect and admiration for wives and husbands who are willing to put up with the military way of life.

Loneliness, long separations, remote assignments, endless regulations: the list of things a military spouse must endure is long. But millions of women and men have cheerfully "served" as they love and support their military spouse. I am amazed and honored by their dedication.

So please accept my heartfelt thanks, each and every one of you, wives and husbands of the 349th, for entrusting your beloved partner to us. Words are inadequate to tell you that we couldn't possibly exist, let alone perform our mission, without your support.✈



Command Chief Master Sergeant's corner

by Chief Master Sgt. Anthony L. Maddux
349th AMW Command Chief Master Sergeant

First sergeants don't load, fly or fix airplanes, but they are fixing something even more important, people's lives. Our first sergeants are carefully selected and formally trained to provide service to all their unit members. Nicknamed as the "top", "shirt" or "first shirt", the first sergeant is the confidante during personal, military or financial difficulties, an ally in struggles with civilian employers, and a contact for our families.

The first sergeant enforces Air Force instructions and directives, implements the commander's policies and programs and, in turn, presents the commander an enlisted corps fully prepared to carry out its mission and military obligations. The first sergeant is the eyes and ears of the squadron commander, but the eyes, ears and the voice of the enlisted people to their commander. That's something first sergeants have been doing since the dawn of the U.S. military itself.

During the Revolutionary War, General Washington

established the "Company First Sergeant." These early first sergeants wore a red sash

around the waist, but in 1847 regulations authorized that the lozenge, a French diamond, designate first sergeants.

The additional duty first sergeants are also performing the same duties, but do not wear the diamond on their sleeves. Today, we recognize the first sergeants and additional duty first sergeants with two new nicknames: Diamond Wearer and Diamond Bearer. They combine the roles of parent, confessor, social worker, financial advisor, disciplinarian and cheerleader, just to name a few. I can best describe the first sergeant by their creed: "I am a First Sergeant."

My job is people - - Every ONE is my Business. I dedicate my time and energy to their needs, their health, morale, discipline and welfare. I grow in strength by strengthening my people. My job is done in faith; my people build my faith. The Air Force is my life; I share it with my people. I believe in the Air Force goal - We take care of our own."✈



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349th Air Mobility Wing
Office of Public Affairs
520 Waldron Street
Travis AFB, CA 94535-2171
Vol. 18, No. 4 April 2000

This funded Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of "CONTACT" are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force. Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 349th AMW Public Affairs Office, Travis AFB, Calif. All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.

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Contents

News

FDA says Anthrax vaccine is safe | 4

Anthrax vaccine facts are spelled out by the FDA.

The 349th says good-bye to one of its own | 5

The 349th AMW says good-bye to Technical Sgt. Freddie Renfro who passed away on March 22.

Det 1 welcomes new commander | 5

The 349th Contingency Hospital, Detachment 1, Fairchild AFB, Wash., welcomes Col. Linda E. Miller as its new commander.

Briefs

Air Force and AFRC News | 6

Catch up on the latest Air Force, AFRC and 349th AMW news.



COVER PHOTOS:

(upper left) Brig. Gen. Gerald A. Black (upper right) Newly promoted Brig. Gen. Black is flanked by 349th AMW Honor Guard members Staff Sgt. Ann Marie N. Scott and Staff Sgt. Gracie Monahan, during the playing of the National Anthem.

(lower left) Brig. Gen. Black's daughter Kristin and son Jay place brigadier general epaulets on their father during the promotion ceremony April 1.

(lower right) Maj. Gen. Wallace Whaley and Brig. Gen. Black's wife, Judy pin on new stars.

**(Photos by Nan Wylie and
Graphic Design by Heide Couch)**

FDA says Anthrax vaccine is safe

Partial truths, misinformation and misinterpretation about the anthrax immunization are driving some people to make career-altering decisions based on fear, rather than fact. People need the facts on this critical force protection issue. The facts are:

- Anthrax is the most likely biological weapon and poses a real threat to our forces, especially in high-risk theaters of operation.
- Anthrax, as a biological weapon, is nearly 100 percent lethal.
- The anthrax vaccine is safe and effective.

Given these facts, failure to immunize our troops would be unconscionable.

How do you know this vaccine is safe? Anthrax vaccine has been proven safe during more than 29 years of use. The Food and Drug Administration, which has the strictest quality criteria of any industrialized country, has repeatedly verified that anthrax vaccine is safe and effective. Every vaccine lot is tested for sterility, safety, purity and potency before distribution.

In her written congressional testimony, Dr. Kathryn Zoon, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research stated, "We believe anthrax vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine for the prevention of anthrax disease – an often-fatal disease. Our confidence in this vaccine, like all vaccines, is based upon four components: first, the clinical trials and subsequent clinical laboratory experience with the vaccine; second, ongoing inspections of the manufacturing facility; third, our lot release requirements; and fourth, our ongoing collection of adverse event reports. We will continue our efforts in all four of these areas, with the anthrax vaccine and all vaccines, to assure that only safe products are on the market."

Rumors say the vaccine stockpile is contaminated; how do you know this isn't true? No valid scientific or even circumstantial evidence exists to support those rumors. Every lot is inspected and evaluated for sterility, safety, purity and potency. Testing is done at the manufacturer and sometimes the FDA as well. At Defense Department's request, additional testing with independent verification started in January 1998 on all stockpiled vaccine lots.

Aren't a lot of people having serious adverse reactions to the vaccine? Although Dover Air Force Base, Del., is reporting a larger number of possible reactions than expected, across the Department of Defense, the number of side effects is very small, and mostly very minor. The intense focus and increased media coverage makes the number seem much higher than it is.

Any vaccine can cause some people to have adverse reactions. Even vaccines we give our children produce some adverse reactions. This vaccine is no different, but the numbers are smaller than most other vaccines and very few serious reactions have occurred.

The FDA has a reporting system to track unexpected adverse reaction and rapidly recall vaccines. This Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System is a nationwide system, not a military one. Providers or patients may access this system to report reactions directly to the FDA. Although never intended to report all reactions, it works as an early warning system. A team of civilian medical experts reviews these reports every four to six weeks, looking for trends or any indication that a vaccine may be causing an unexpected or severe reaction.

As of Oct. 20, 1999, only 362 adverse reaction reports have been filed on almost 1.2 million shots given to more than 350,000 people. Of the 98 serious reactions (loss of duty greater than 24 hours or hospitalizations) only 64 have been judged by the expert panel to most probably be due to the vaccine. This is a rate of well less than .1 percent. Anthrax is a vaccine, just like other vaccines. It protects against a bacteria just like typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria and many other vaccines. It just happens to be a bacterium that not only occurs naturally but also can be concentrated and used as a biological warfare agent.

All vaccines have some side effects. Usually these reactions are local and mild inflammatory reactions. Sometimes they are allergic and, rarely, are they severe. When looking at the reaction statistics for other vaccines, it becomes clear that anthrax has very low rates of reaction. For example, re-immunization with injectable typhoid vaccine causes tenderness in 98 percent of those immunized, feverish feeling in 4 percent of those vaccinated, malaise (a generalized feeling of illness) in 24 percent, headache in 11 percent and some type of pain in 56 percent.

These rates are much higher rates than anthrax, yet we take it willingly. DPT, a vaccine most people routinely give their children, causes a certain small percentage of those immunized to have reactions ranging from fever to severe neurological disease, and behavioral changes. We take vaccines and we give them to our children because the risks from vaccination are minor compared to the risks from the disease.

The bottom line: Anthrax kills. The anthrax vaccine protects – and it's much safer than many routine immunizations. That's why medics, commanders, senior leaders and others who have researched the scientific facts have lined up to take this shot. (*Reprinted from the Capital Flyer, Andrews AFB, Md.*) ➤

The 349th says good-bye to one of its own

by Staff Sgt. Shayne Sewell

The 349th Air Mobility Wing recently lost a member of the 45th Aerial Port Squadron. Technical Sgt. Freddie D. Renfro, inventory management assistant, passed away in Vallejo, Calif., apparently of natural causes March 22.

He had just recently been promoted to technical sergeant and served 21 years of combined active and reserve duty.

He enlisted in the Air Force on active duty in June 1961 and served stateside and abroad. In December 1966, he began his career with the United States Postal Service and continued his military career in the Air Force Reserve.

He was lovingly nicknamed the "little professor" by his mother as a child because he was such an excellent

student. Renfro pursued his post-secondary education at San Francisco State University graduating with honors and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology with an emphasis in criminal and deviant behavior in June 1975.



Freddie D. Renfro

In 1977, Renfro became a postal inspector for the United States Postal Inspection Service. According to his family, the highlight of his career was playing an instrumental role in the investigation of the criminal activities of the Unabomber. Renfro retired from the Postal Inspection Service in May 1997.

According to his family, "Renfro was a quiet, sensitive, introspective and sentimental man. He was often known to stop the moment to bring attention to geography and history, and loved to talk politics and keep up with current events."✈

Det. 1 welcomes new commander

by Technical Sgt. Marvin Meek

Colonel Linda E. Miller, a former chief flight nurse with nearly 2,000 flying hours, was named the commander of the 349th Contingency Hospital's Detachment 1, Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash. on March 1.

She accumulated all of her flying hours in the C-9A aircraft. She comes to Det. 1 from the 932nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Scott AFB, Ill., where she served as squadron commander.

Miller, a career medical professional, began her Air Force career with a direct commission into the Air Force Nurse Corps. After attending Officers Basic Military Training for Medical Officers at Sheppard AFB, Texas, she served as a staff nurse at the USAF Hospital, F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo.

She began her Air Force Reserve career in 1974, serving as a nurse with the 73rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Scott AFB, Ill. There she performed a variety of duties including aircrew scheduling, hospital training for nurses and medical technicians, and chief of staff development. She became the 73rd AES' chief nurse in October 1994, a position she maintained until she assumed command of the 932nd AES.



Col. Linda E. Miller

Miller is originally from Altoona, Pa. and is married to William Miller of St. Louis, Mo. ✈

Employer Day Dates:

Operations Group - May 13
(70th ARS, 312th AS, 349th AES,
45th, 55th APS)

POC: Chief Master Sgt. Karen Redd
(707) 424-7003

Support Group - July 8
POC: Technical Sgt. David Muller or
Capt. Heather Capella
(707) 424-3737

Operations Group - July 22
(79th ARS, 301st AS,
82nd APS)

POC: 1st Lt. James Harty
(707) 424-3696 or
Maj. Mark Kleinman
(707) 424-7902

Logistics Group - Sept. 23
POC: Senior Master Sgt.
Theresa Matusick
(707) 424-5884

RESERVISTS MAY FLY 'MIL-AIR' TO PERFORM IDTs OVERSEAS

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. - Traveling overseas to do an inactive duty for training tour just got easier. Reservists who perform IDTs at a location outside the continental United States may now fly in space-required, priority 4 status on military aircraft.

There are various categories of space-required travel, says Senior Master Sgt. Phil Little, superintendent of traffic management at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command. First priority goes to service members on emergency leave. Priority 2 covers people going to a temporary duty location, and Priority 3 is for people returning from a TDY or going on a permanent-change-of-station move.

"Priority 4 space-required travelers have precedence over space-available people on regular leave or retirees," explained Little. A provision of the Fiscal Year 2000 National Defense Authorization Act permits reservists to travel overseas for IDTs on Department of Defense aircraft. There is no charge for space-required travel from an approved departure point to the IDT location overseas and back. That does not apply to travel in active-duty status - active duty for training, annual tour, active duty for special work, active-duty TDYs, mandays, etc.

To get on board, reservists need a written authorization, other than an official travel order, which indicates the dates and locations of the IDT. An approving official from the member's chain-of-command must sign the authorization. Reservists who travel space-required for IDTs overseas need their military identification card and all other appropriate documentation as required by the Foreign Clearance Guide to enter a country, such as passport, visa and country clearance. They can also expect to pay a "head tax" and any applicable federal inspection fees, meal charges and excess baggage fees before they depart the air terminal.

Travelers may call a passenger reservation center directly to book a space-required seat. They shouldn't call more than 30 days in advance, and passenger reservation centers usually stop taking reservations 24 hours before flight departure. People who don't pre-book their flight are processed as "last of duty stand-by," which means revenue-generating passengers such as retirees and active-duty members traveling space-available get to go first.

Reservists should check with their local traffic management office for the telephone numbers of passenger reservation centers and for further guidance on this policy. If they are unable to obtain space-required travel, reservists who are performing IDTs overseas may use the GSA City Pair program at their own expense. TMOs can provide assistance. Travelers still need written approval and must use a government-sponsored travel card to obtain City Pair fares.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PHOTO POLICY

Public Affairs will take photos of any event on Travis which we plan to publish in the Contact magazine. If you have such an event, please contact us at 707-424-3936 to schedule a photographer. Events that we would cover include deployments, exercises, human interest stories, wing or group level changes of command and large-scale squadron activities, to name a few. For other official military activities like squadron changes of command or retirements, we will supply film but the photography and developing must be done by the squadron. If you need photography assistance for these types of events, please contact the base photo lab at 707-424-5584.

DOD FIXES BAH INEQUITY

WASHINGTON — Service members who move into areas where the basic allowance for housing rate dropped Jan. 1 will still be paid at the higher 1999 rate, Defense Department officials said Feb. 22.

Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said DOD will add \$27 million to the basic allowance for housing to get rid of an "irritant" caused by a new method of measuring service members' stateside housing costs. Service members of the same grade and living in the same area were receiving different allowances.

The new computing system raised allowances in some areas and reduced them in others. But DOD officials gave onetime rate protection to service members in areas where the rates declined — so long as they did not move, the members would be paid at the higher rate.

However, Bacon said, service members moving into an area were receiving the new, lower rate. The additional \$27 million eliminates this inequity, he said.

"This was a problem of great concern for those receiving less money from the government," Bacon said. "So we're going to fix this small, but annoying inequity that some service members were experiencing." He said DOD officials are not sure where the \$27 million will come from.

With this action, Bacon said, DOD officials hope all concerned can focus on the larger problem: eliminating out-of-pocket expenses for service members living off-base by 2005. He said service members living off base currently pay about 19 percent of their costs out-of-pocket. Defense Secretary William S. Cohen has proposed reducing those expenses to 15 percent in 2001. Eliminating out-of-pocket expenses will cost \$3 billion.

DOD computes basic housing allowance rates for more than 400 U.S. locations. DOD-wide, about 752,000 service members are eligible for the allowance, and about 73 percent receive it at the "with dependents" rates.

Show your boss what it's really like

Give your boss a chance to see the Air Force Reserve in action. Employer Appreciation Days include a briefing, an aircraft display and an orientation flight aboard either a KC-10 or C-5, all designed to give your employer a greater understanding of our mission.

Here's how it works. First ask your boss. Then fill out the application form (see below) completely and legibly (social security numbers are needed for passenger manifesting), and give the form to your group POC. See Page 5 for a list of the dates of each employer day and the group's POC.

Sorry, family members and spouses are not eligible for the flight. Due to space limitations, reservists may not be able to accompany employers on the flight. One employer per reservist.

Have your employer wear comfortable shoes, with low heels, and bring a camera with plenty of film. They will receive a letter and base pass, so be sure to include either the home address or business address of your employer.

If you have any questions, please call your group POC or Public Affairs at (707) 424-3936.

EMPLOYER APPRECIATION DAY APPLICATION

Employer's Name: _____

First

M.I.

Last

Employer's SSAN: _____ **Employer's Title:** _____

Company Name: _____

Employer's Mailing Address: _____

Number

Street (or Box No.)

City

State

Zip

Person to be Notified in Emergency: _____

Employer's Emergency Phone: _____

Reservist Name/Rank: _____

Reservist SSAN: _____ **Reservist Squadron:** _____

Reservist Phone: Duty: _____ **Home:** _____ **Work:** _____

Area Code & Number

Area Code & Number

Employer wishes to fly: ☐ yes ☐ no If YES - which type aircraft (circle) **KC-10** or **C-5**

Promotions

Effective April 1

Chief Master Sergeant

(Promotion Enhancement Program)

Celeste Barcelo, 70th ARS

Senior Master Sergeant

(Promotion Enhancement Program)

James M. Majors, 349th MSS

Master Sergeant

(Promotion Enhancement Program)

Donald C. Blair, Jr., 349th EMS
Carl R. Carlson, 349th AGS
James E. Emplit, 749th AGS
Jane N. Geldermann, 349th ASTS
Randy L. Krueger, 312th AS
Richard M. Stockand, 70th ARS

Master Sergeant

(Effective March 1)

Ralph M. Davis, 349th ASTS

Technical Sergeant

(Promotion Enhancement Program)

Steven S. Anderson, 349th EMS
Darin D. Farmon, 349th EMS
Gregory J. Harding, 749th AGS
David C. Jordan, 312th AS
Liana V. Jordan, 349th MDS
Elaine E. Kennedy, 312th AS
Frank A. Somarriba, 749th AGS
Phillip G. Vogel, 312th AS
Wade C. Wells, 70th ARS
Wesley D. Wheeler, 349th MSS

Technical Sergeant

(Effective March 1)

Lee E. Cargile, 349th ASTS
Judith A. Ohrt, 349th ASTS
Gregory J. Weicher, 349th ASTS
Mark L. Wittkopp, 349th ASTS
Pat M. Young, 349th ASTS

Staff Sergeant

(Effective March 1)

Vincent A. Turley, 349th ASTS

Airman First Class

(Effective March 1)

Genesis A. M. Jordan, 349th ASTS

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349TH AIR MOBILITY WING
520 WALDRON STREET
TRAVIS AFB CA 94535-2171
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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PERMIT NO. 348



Contact magazine is printed
for reservists like staff Sgt.
Ross A. Wood, Family
Readiness Technician, 349th
Air Mobility Wing.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Patti Holloway